



# NEWSLETTER

Issue No.7, March 2006

## Global Connections and Exchange Program for Tajikistan

Global Connections and Exchange Program for Tajikistan has established 24 Internet Learning Centers (ILCs) in secondary schools across Tajikistan. The program's main goal is to increase global dialogue and educational opportunities by installing modern computer equipment with Internet access in schools, and developing training and learning projects for teachers and students.

### **Tajikistan Global Connections and Exchange Program activities include:**

- \* Teacher training on using computers and the Internet in classroom teaching;
- \* U.S. school partnerships on civic education projects, teacher and student exchanges;
- \* Public access and programs for community members and disadvantaged groups;
- \* Development of sustainable practices for schools and communities.

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Girls from Sarband singing Navruz songs

### **U.S. Teacher Exchange to Tajikistan!**

The Teacher Exchange of Tajikistan GCEP will start in April with the visit of teachers from the United States to Tajikistan! This spring, Tajikistan ILCs will meet teachers from their partner schools. The Teacher Exchange participants are: George Thornton from Oroville High School in Oroville, Washington; Alvin Moses from Robert E. Lee High School in Magnolia, Texas; and Andy Dean from College Preparatory School in Oakland, California. In the course of their tour teachers will meet with students and educators from most of their partner schools, conduct lessons and activities, learn the customs and traditions of different regions of our country, and visit historical and interesting sights of Tajikistan.

We are all very excited to welcome our guests and hope all the ILCs will join us in showing them the beauty of Tajikistan and great benefits of GCEP. The Exchange will be an interesting and valuable experience for all involved. As Steve Bsharah, one of the U.S. teachers from the last Teacher Exchange Program in 2005, says: "I will never be able to thank RI-SOL for the opportunity to visit this part of the world. It is hard not to apply again for this opportunity as I know there was still more to learn when my time in the country came to an end. But I also realize that it is important to expand this unique opportunity to other teachers who need to be exposed to this unique learning opportunity".

Make sure not to miss the April issue of our newsletter where we will highlight the teachers' visit from the United States! You can start reading about the Teacher Exchange now from the teachers' e-journals at [www.connect-tajikistan.org/forum](http://www.connect-tajikistan.org/forum).

## School Olympiads

Every year Tajikistan schools host traditional Olympiads on humanitarian and academic subjects. School Olympiads are contests where students compete to show their knowledge on various topics. Usually the Olympiad is held in several steps: first it is conducted among students of all schools from one district or city, then the Olympiad takes place at the regional level, and then only the top students proceed to the national level.

Citizens of Kulob city are very proud of their Lyceum No.1 named after Ismoili Somoni, and consider it the best educational institution not only in their city, but also in the Republic. The lyceum has had an Internet Learning Center for more than two years which helps students and teachers improve their knowledge and skills on different subjects, and students often get top places at the Olympiads. The lyceum is proud to share that this year 22 students who won first places in the city Olympiad of Kulob were representing Lyceum No.1! These students then took part in a regional Olympiad which was conducted in Kurgan-Tyube in March. At the regional Olympiad, students of 9<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> grades from Kulob Lyceum and School No. 40 of Chorbogh village took 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> places in almost all subjects: informatics, algebra, physics, chemistry, biology, history and law, Tajik language and literature, and English and Russian languages. Here students demonstrated a high level of preparedness that opened doors to the next level of competitions – the Republican Olympiad. These results come from the hard work of teachers and the impact of the Global Connections and Exchange Program which gives students the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills in different academic subjects. Many of the participants and winners of the Olympiads are members of project groups and clubs of our ILCs.

Students from all the regions of our Republic who won top places at the regional Olympiads will come to Dushanbe to represent their schools. We warmly congratulate our students with the successful participation in the regional Olympiad and wish them success at the upcoming final Olympiad.



Participants of Regional Olympiad from Lyceum No.1 in Kulob

## British Ambassador Visits Kulob



English club members show Mr. Ambassador Graeme Loten [www.english.tj](http://www.english.tj) website which helps them to improve their English

In early March, the British Ambassador to Tajikistan Mr. Graeme Loten paid another visit to our Kulob Internet Learning Center during his trip to the region. One of the goals of his visit was to see the status of education in the region and the quality of learning and teaching the English language in particular.

The Ambassador met with students, teachers and the school administration of Lyceum No. 1. Mr. Graeme Loten was pleased to see that students can easily communicate in English, a skill which has improved among GCE students as they communicate with peers from the United States and other countries of the world.

*The Tajikistan Global Connections and Exchange Program for Central Asia is a project of Relief International - Schools Online's Global Citizenship & Youth Philanthropy Program and has been made possible with major funding from the United States State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Global Catalyst Foundation*

## International Garbage

In March project group students of Tajikistan ILCs and their U.S. partner schools participated in the "International Garbage" activity, conducting research on a sometimes ignored, but important global problem – the problem of trash. Students within the bounds of their city/village conducted research on trash in their communities and explored what they do with the trash that is produced, learned about what happens to trash after it is collected, and discussed the impact this has on the community and environment they live in. Through conducting research, interviewing various workers and community members, and thinking about one's own habits, participants studied the large effect simple everyday actions have in our communities.

Students took to task with great enthusiasm and conducted this activity in a creative way. For example, students from Khorog ILC put on a skit designed by the students themselves and demonstrated to the whole school how trash influences the environment and mankind. Students took on the role of unique characters and played different games which helped to show the audience the importance of keeping the environment clean, as trash can cause different infectious diseases which are dangerous for people. Other Tajikistan students met with representatives of ecological centers of their district

and received answers to many questions of their survey. Publications of U.S. partner schools showed that recycling is active in their cities. For example, students from Delano High School say: "The city does recycling on its routine sweeps around Delano. However, some people like to recycle on their own accord and get rewarded by it. Cans, plastic bottles, and glass can be taken to a recycling center a couple blocks away from our high school and get paid money for the recyclable items they return. The practice of recycling brings back more resources towards the city and the nation. It takes less energy to reuse a can

of Pepsi than it does to create a brand new can out of scratch. Recycling also brings to use some of the functions of our daily lives. For example, recycling plastics can be used to create gazebos with more capabilities than if it was to have been made from cloth. There are even such items as pencils that have been made from recycled items." Other students discussed harmful ways of treating garbage. For instance, students from Oroville High School consider: "There are many pluses and minuses to burning garbage. Burning garbage is a good way to get rid of old papers, cardboard, and other burnables that clutter your garbage can. A minus is the stinky smoke and the pollution. Burning garbage stinks and it pollutes the air. Some people even try to burn rubber, plastic, metal, and other non-burnables. Burning these kinds of materials creates poisonous fumes".

Seeing the impact trash has everywhere students ask themselves: "How much more could Mother Earth take before all of her landfills get filled up and actually take half of the world's land?" After this activity, students realize their own responsibility and power to make sure this doesn't happen.



Garbage truck collecting trash in Kurgan-Tyube



King of Trash and his daughter played by Khorog students



More needs to be done to keep communities clean

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## Ask Psychologists Online



Students asking questions online to psychologists

A follow-up to the February partnership activity on “Conflicts in Our Daily Life” was a long-term online forum between GCEP students and psychologists. Starting from the 9<sup>th</sup> of March and lasting until the end of month, students had the chance to participate in online consultations with a team of three qualified psychologists who answered various questions on conflicts happening in students’ everyday lives. To make the forum more effective students were suggested to pose their questions in the following topics: conflict between a person and a group, intra-personal conflict and conflict between individuals. Each of the forum topics was coordinated by one of the psychologists who talked about different reasons of conflict, its consequences,

and ways of addressing it. It was pleasant to see the outburst of interest not only from teenagers but also from their parents who would ask advice to help solve conflicts with their children, as the generation gap is a problem which has existed for hundreds of years. Parents from Khorog ILC were concerned about things which keep them from understanding their children, and asked questions about how parents should act if relations with their children become more and more difficult. Teenagers’ psychology is very hard as adolescence is a time when a boy/girl grows up and believes that s/he is old enough to make decisions on their own. But for parents these “adults” are still helpless children who can make wrong decisions, and in these cases teenagers take offense.

The psychologists’ advice through the forum has a very positive influence on teenagers, and explains the formation of personality as a person becomes an individual starting from his early ages. For instance, there are such students who can not stand against another person or a group of people and thus feel themselves weak and dependent on others. For such students, the psychologists advise student to always stand up based on their beliefs and values, but only in peaceful ways.

For others, the psychologists recommend to be less self-critical and accept who you are as a person.

The ability to listen, speak, and discuss openly, by psychologists’ opinion, is very important because most conflicts arise due to misunderstandings, and a lack of respect for others’ points of view.

We can tell many interesting and useful pieces of advice from the psychologists for students, but you can read more on the forum for yourself at <http://www.connect.tj/forum/viewforum.php?f=20>

The three-week course of the online forum will be summed up by a training for students at one of our ILCs.

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## Young Photographers



Tajik women raise the children and future of Tajikistan

The first week of March brought a photo essay contest organized by Relief International – Schools Online, for all involved GCEP countries. This contest was devoted to International Women's Day which is traditionally celebrated on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March all over the world. Students submitted several interesting photos but those which delivered the idea of women's role in Tajikistani

society in the best way were prepared by project group students from Chorbogh, Gulyakandoz and Isfara ILCs.



This Tajik woman devoted her life to her family and country.



Women bake bread and provide their families



Tajik women do the housework and also work in the field



Tajik women do embroidery in their free time



Children are important guests on Navruz

Another opportunity to reveal and display students' skills in photography presented our traditional spring holiday Navruz, which is celebrated on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March. People start to celebrate Navruz 2 or 3 days before the holiday itself and make thorough preparations to greet the coming of the new year. But the biggest festival takes place on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March all over the country, in every city and village, and lasts for the entire month. Our students recorded the best moments of this in-



Wrestling in Isfara during Navruz

teresting spring holiday.

We congratulate our young photographers on their successful art creations!

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